Duty on Newsprint

2750. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are actively considering a proposal to reduce or to fully withdraw the duty on newsprint;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether there is any scheme of the Government to make newsprint available to the small and medium newspapers at concessional or subsidised rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) There is no proposal at present either to reduce or to fully withdraw the duty on newsprint.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Small and medium newspapers with entitlement of less than 300 metric tonnes are free to obtain their requirements from either the imported or the indigenous varieties. Small newspapers are fully exempted from paying customs duty on imported newsprint. Medium newspapers pay only 50 per cent of the customs duty leviable on imported newsprint.

Ad-hoc employees in the Planning Commission

2751. SHRI SOHAN LAL DHUSIYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some employees, who were working as clerks on *ad-hoc basis* in the Planning Commission, have recently been reverted to the post of peons after their putting a service of more than three years;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take to retain these employees in the same grade permanently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Fall in Value of Rupee

2752. SHRI M. KADHRASHA:
SHRI V. RAMANATHAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rupee has dipped to an all time low;

(b) if so, what is the value of Rupee at present;

(c) what steps Government are going to take to stop further fall in value of Rupee; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to devalue the currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BHAHM DUTT): (a) and (b) The purchasing power of rupee measured as the reciprocal of the All-India Consumer price Index for Industrial Workers (base 1960—100) increased from 14.45p paise in November, 1986 to 14.53 paise in December, 1986 and remained steady in January, 1987 (latest available).

(c) The thrust of Government's anti-inflationary policy continues to be on effective demand and supply management including strengthening of public distribution system, mopping up of excess liquidity in the system and action against economic offenders.

(d) No, Sir. The external value of the rupee is linked to a basket of currencies and in line with the changes in the exchange rate of the currencies in the basket necessary adjustments are made by RBI from time to time.